

E

66

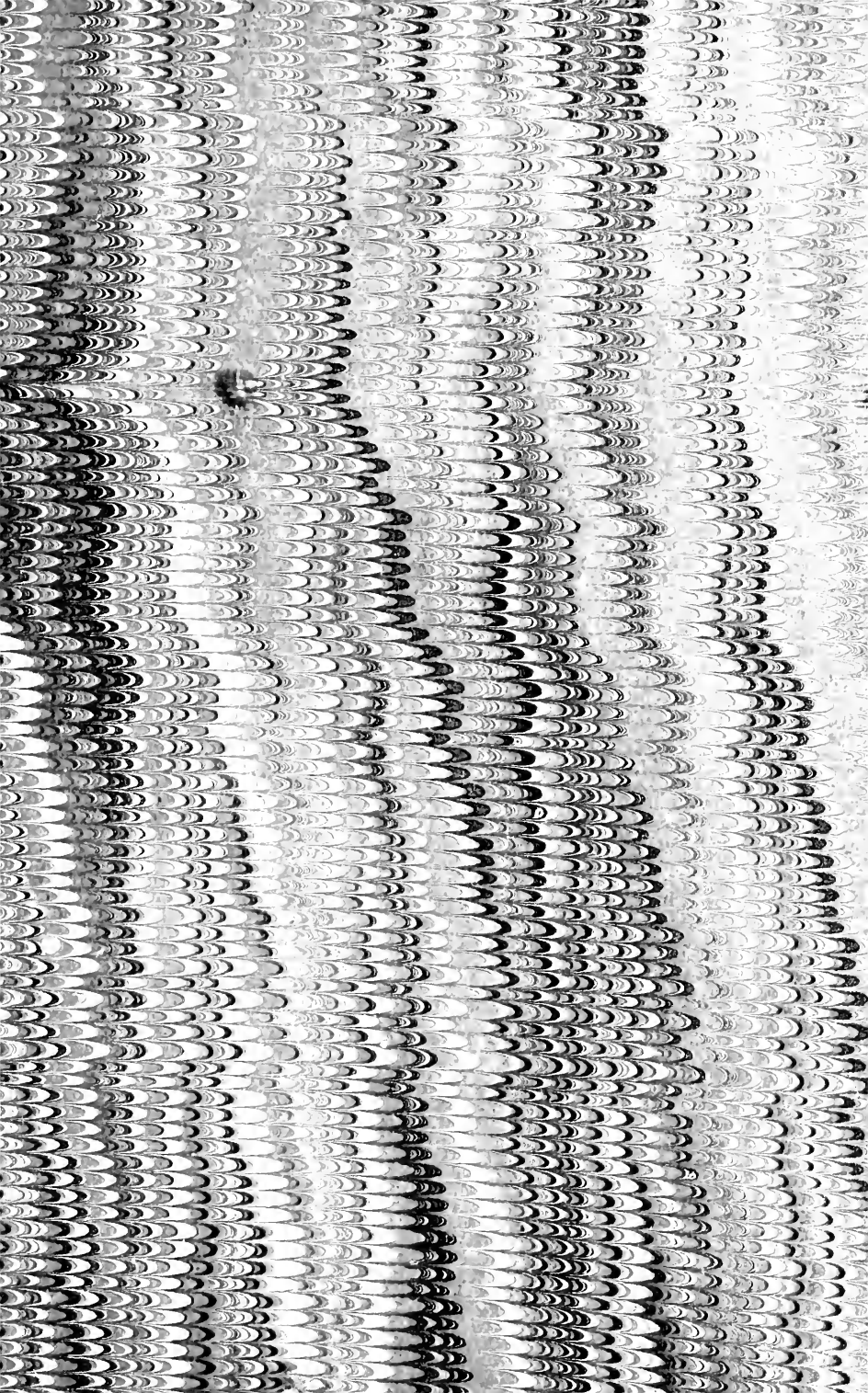
NO. 100

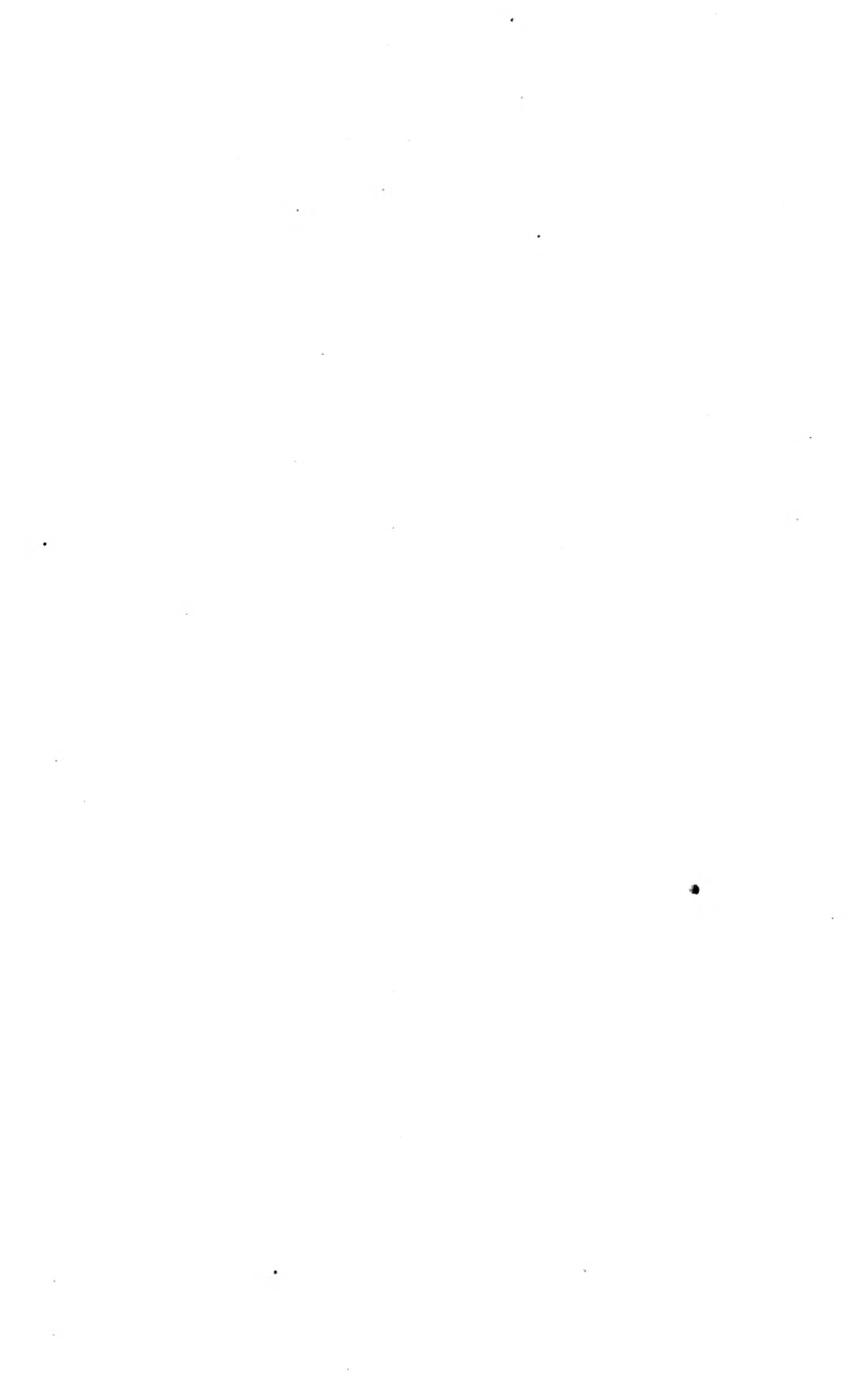
~~825/10~~

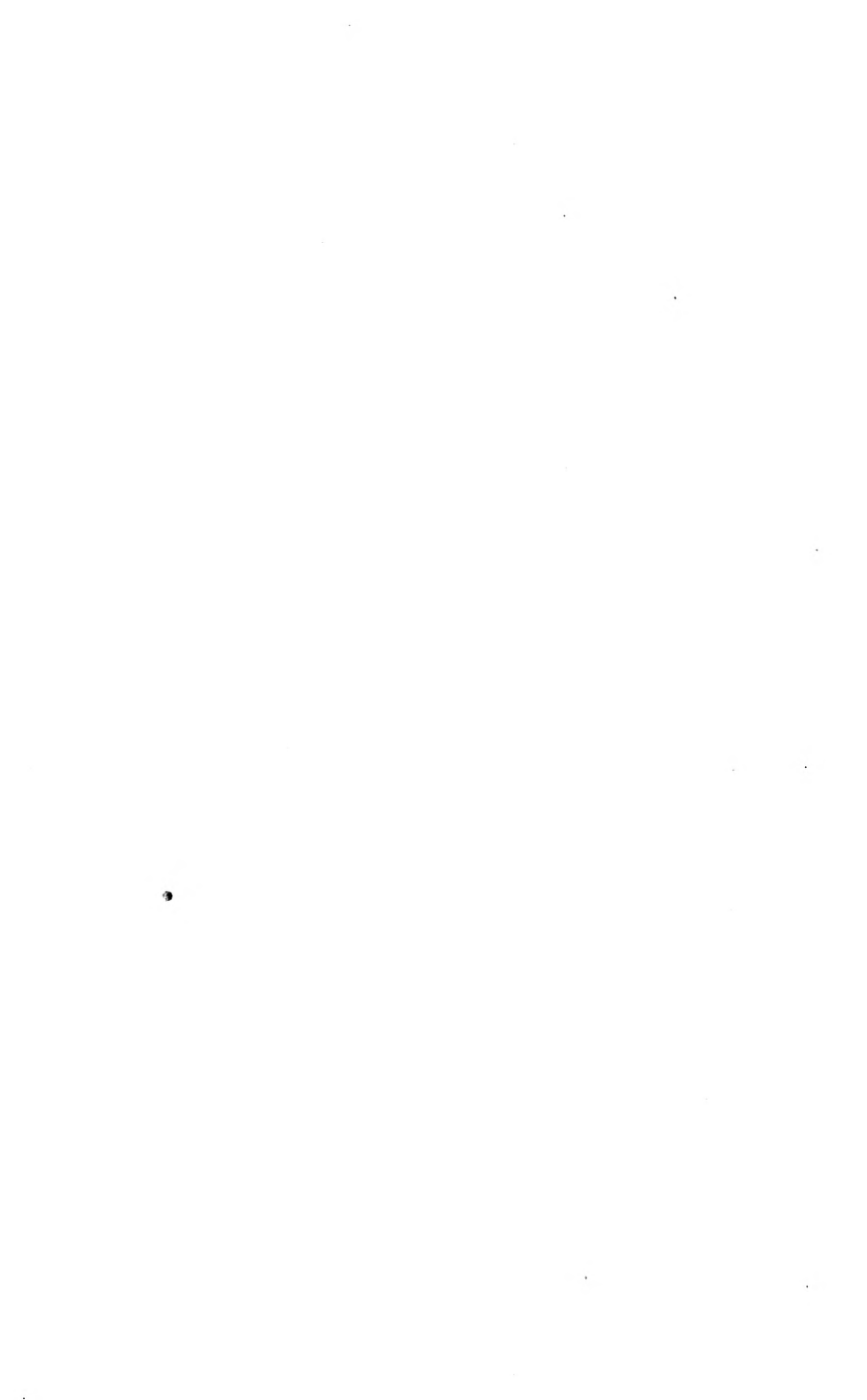
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Ch. E. 10
10

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.







LETTER FROM COL. EDMONDSTON

TO THE

Hon. REVERDY JOHNSON, U. S. Senate,

CONCERNING THE

CONGRESSIONAL "JUNTO."

—
CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS TO NOMINATE THE
PRESIDENT.

—
INSIDIOUS SCHEME TO IMPEACH THE PRESIDENT.

—
BEN. WADE, ^{and} STANTON

THE PETS OF THE "JUNTO."

—
TACTICS OF ULTRA RADICALS

TO PRESERVE POWER.

—
ANDREW JOHNSON, TO OUTFLANK THE CONGRESS.—THE
PEOPLE'S NOMINEE FOR PRESIDENT.—POLITICAL PARTIES:

INCLUDING EXTRACT FROM A

"REPORT"

CONCERNING THE

"WAYS AND MEANS"

TO REBUILD THE

LEVEES OF LOUISIANA.

1868



LETTER FROM COL. ✓ EDMONDSTON

TO THE

Hon. REVERDY JOHNSON, U. S. Senate,

CONCERNING THE

CONGRESSIONAL "JUNTO."

—
CONGRESSIONAL CAUCUS TO NOMINATE THE
PRESIDENT.

—
INSIDIOUS SCHEME TO IMPEACH THE PRESIDENT.

—
BEN. WADE, ^{and} STANTON of Congress offices,

THE PETS OF THE "JUNTO."

—
✓ TACTICS OF ULTRA RADICALS

TO PRESERVE POWER.

—
ANDREW JOHNSON, TO OUTFLANK THE CONGRESS.—THE
PEOPLE'S NOMINEE FOR PRESIDENT.—POLITICAL PARTIES:

INCLUDING EXTRACT FROM A

"REPORT"

CONCERNING THE

"WAYS AND MEANS"

TO REBUILD THE

LEVEES OF LOUISIANA.

E666
E24



Honorable REVERDY JOHNSON,

U. S. SENATE.

Sir:

The moment seems to be extremely auspicious to break down the degrading Congressional system which is fast paralyzing the country. The best citizens acknowledge the embarrassments of the Administration—they acknowledge that under the usurpations and overtowering control of Congress offices are conferred merely to preserve power, and without the least regard to fitness.

A Congressional Caucus is in embryo to nominate either Ben Wade, or Stanton, or Johnson, for the Presidency of the United States. Whether we consider the measure itself, the character and talents of the men, or whence they come, these nominations would be equally exceptionable and odious.—These Congressional nominations are hostile to all freedom and independence of suffrages.

A certain "Junto," of actual and factitious men (who have possession of the Government consider the United States as their property, and by bawling support their claims,) have too long succeeded in duping the Republican masses. One of their principal arts, and which has been systematically taught by the 'Jacobins, is that of promoting State dissensions, not between the Radicals and Conservatives,—that would do them no good,—but schisms among the "Moderate Republicans." By looking around it may be seen how the attention of leading

men in the different States has thus been turned from general and State politics. This disgraceful domination should not continue. Concerning Wade, Sumner and Stanton, independently of the manner of such contemplated nomination, the men themselves are the most improper and incompetent that could be selected—naturally dull, pliant and obsequious, indecisive to a degree that would be incredible to those who do not know them; vacillating and of course hypocritical,—having no opinion on any subject, and who would always be under the government of the worst of men,—such characters would be exactly suited to the Radical “Junto.” To this “Junto” some good men have sacrificed themselves; and what have they got by it? their hatred and abhorrence! Like the victim in “Goethe’s Faust, they were expected to sell their soul to the Devil for the glory of participating in the Government of the world for a few hours.”

Were those who compose the ‘Junto’ ever known to countenance a man of talents and independence of character? never—nor ever will!

It is time that certain prominent men should venture to call “their souls, their own,” by manifesting that they have some individual character—some opinion of their own. Teach this ‘Junto’ to fear an opposing power, and they will at once, be at its feet! Thus far, they have reason to believe that those opposed to them, fear them.

If, then, there be a man in the United States, of firmness and decision of purpose, and having standing enough to afford even a hope of success as the Presidential nominee, it is the duty of the people to hold him up to public view:—that man is ANDREW JOHNSON! Nothing is wanting but a respectable nomination, and Johnson’s success is inevitable. Whether a formal and open nomination should at once be made, or whe-

ther for the present, the State Legislatures should be content with barely denouncing Congressional caucuses and nominations, the friends of Andrew Johnson may judge. One consideration may incline us to hesitate about the policy of a precipitate nomination: it is this—that the nominee ought at first to be passive; from the moment he shall be announced as a candidate, he will be assailed by the Congressional ‘Junto,’ with menaces, and with insidious promises of boons and favors. There is danger that Johnson might be wrought upon by such practices.

These suggestions should not be considered as arising from any exclusive attachment to any candidate in particular, or design to make any special nomination for the Presidency,—the object is, to break down this vile combination which rules and degrades the United States. If any other man could be held up with better prospect of success, let his name be announced:—there would seem to be none such.

So long as the present system prevails, this country will be struggling against wind and tide to preserve a precarious existence.

If, at the proper time, Johnson will hold himself aloof from the perfidious caresses with which he may be overwhelmed at Washington, his nomination may prove successful. He is personally popular, and possesses a commanding influence over those with whom he commingles, or is in any manner connected—an ascendancy which, in a measure, can only be ascribed to the force of intellect.

The lines of political parties may thus be drawn:

First, the violent Radicals, who are for expelling and depriving of property all rebels in the Southern States, in hopes, by that means, to preserve the power in their own hands.

Second, are those who wish to suppress all violence, to soften the rigour of the laws, against the lately rebellious, and not to interdict them from that political and social equality which may by degrees obliterate the remembrance of past misdeeds;

Third, are those who hope for power under the idea that the remembrance of the past should be lost, though they continually keep it up by their avowed attachment to the "lost cause."

It may readily be inferred that Andrew Johnson sympathizes with the second of the above parties.

The vindictive fury that would threaten to impeach the President, is the mere idle splutter of restless political squabblers whose brains are a little disordered with the whirl of political commotion—a measure so unprecedented in the history of our Republic, directly tending to anarchy and revolution, simply excites a smile among sensible men.

Preparatory to the elections, the people cannot be too cautious in their future choice of Senators, that none be elected but those on whom from long and certain experience, they can rely as men attached to the liberties of their country, and firm friends to our laws and Constitution; men who will spurn at any proposition that has a tendency to curtail the privileges of the people, and who at the same time, that they protect us against judicial tyranny, have wisdom to see the propriety of supporting that necessary independence in courts of justice, both of the Legislature and people. Concerning the results of the late intestine war, and thereupon the conceived necessity of reconstructing the Southern States preparatory to their re-admission into the Union, it is hard to say which condition, that of the oppressor, or the oppressed, most disqualifies for a just appreciation of the great principles of Civil Liberty, and a firm and resolute purpose to establish free institutions.

The will, or purposes of the legitimate people of this State—concerning the re-establishment of said institutions as they might conceive would constitute their future safety and welfare under the extraordinary measures imposed by “edict” of Congress—they have no means of expressing nor indeed was it contemplated that they should be consulted nor even considered.

Therefore, it may as well, at once be proclaimed; now, and in all time to come: that State reconstruction under the Doctrine promulgated by acts of Congress predicated upon the “Sherman Military Bill” is simply a short-lived farce that will not stand the test of time—an experiment manifestly at war with the laws of Nature,—with all rational system of Government,—and utterly unsupported by any sound theory of political philosophy or economy. Setting aside the sacred magna charta of the Union, this doctrine strikes the American mind as a superlatively absurd and degrading despotism.

When we reflect that under the Federal compact of these United States there can be no centralized powers of Government permitted to absorb the reserved powers of State Government without subverting the Constitution, and that it is preposterous to conceive the idea of any vested power in Congress whereby a State may be held and governed as a conquered province, the conviction is irresistible that the edict of Congress prescribing a Constitution for a State through the *modus operandi* of reserving to itself the right to reject or accept it, is an unwarrantable assumption of power unknown to the laws derived from the Constitution under which we profess to live.

Some of our military political economists plunge at random into a confusion of ideas by assuming a starting point as a settled fact, and therefrom plausibly argue deductions which they conceive to be not only logical, but irrefutable. But if

perchance their starting point be wrong, the data from which they reason be false, necessarily all the conclusions they arrive at are simply illusory. If, for instance, they predicate their arguments upon what they are pleased to assume as law, when in reality it is not law, but merely an edict, promulgated and sustained by force, or the persuasive power of the bayonet, then indeed all their plausible deductions, and lofty interpretations are dissipated, and at once fall to the ground. To prove this proposition, and such argumentative deductions, it would be only necessary that a superior array of an opposing military power should promulgate, and sustain by force, an Edict, diametrically opposed in spirit to what may have been promulgated as law by inferior force. Here, then, we would have, so-called laws, diametrically opposed, each pronounced and proclaimed in turn by the argument of force, and yet the stronger arm would plausibly maintain the theory advanced by inferior force, to be fallacious !

Next to the influences excited in reference to the condition (politically) of the country, so far as immediately concerns the interests of Louisiana, there is no other element conducive to the future prosperity of the State in any degree equal in importance to that which may be derived from a suitable system of Levee protection against the periodical floods of the Mississippi River.

In view thereof, the following Extract from a "Report" upon that subject is respectfully submitted :

"Extract from a report, concerning the "ways and means" to rebuild the Levees of Louisiana.

"The measures proposed to rebuild the Levees consist of a mere loan of the National credit; not likely in the end to cost the Government a dollar, but certain to develop at

once the resources of a great State, restore it to its former enviable position in the financial and commercial world, and save its citizens from the effects of poverty and destitution which they are now suffering.

Such beneficial results should be considered from a National point of view as might be supposed to authorize the work to be commenced and carried on as a National work inasmuch as that the advantages to be derived will not be confined to the limits of a single State, but will be extended throughout the States bordering the Mississippi Valley.

Louisiana is now insolvent: all she wants is credit. The Nation can give that credit without possible loss to itself.

When the Agricultural Districts of the State are protected by an efficient system of Levees; and the swamp lands reclaimed, as they may be, we shall witness the return of those days so unwisely closed for a time by the late war, and the country instead of sending abroad many millions of money annually to purchase sugar at exorbitant prices, will again become an exporter of the article and thus create abroad credits founded on labor, the true and only basis of wealth; thereby augmenting individual prosperity and adding solidity and strength to our National finances.

Until the Levees are rebuilt, poverty and destitution must reign supreme. If Congress possesses the power through a Freedman's Bureau to feed a helpless people from the Federal coffers, let no man deny its authority to do what is absolutely necessary to make them self-sustaining. If Congress through its edicts can build school-houses to give food for the mind, it may build Levees to save the body from perishing.

Labor is the great demand of the country to-day. The negro cannot leave the South: it is his native, his natural home. Let us by rebuilding the Levees, open up fields of

industry for him, and the competition for his labor will go far to settle the question of his rights. This competition will do more than "Freedmen's Bureaux, or "Civil Rights bills."

In concluding the remarks concerning the Levees of Louisiana, we should not omit to notice the strange ideas developed under Military Governments in these "piping times of peace." The following article published in the "Republican" of New Orleans, touches pointedly an "erratic scheme" seriously proposing, through the aid of Military authority, to build the Levees by "draft," viz :

THE STATE LEVEES—A DRAFT PROPOSED TO REBUILD THEM.

"The levee convention, composed of representatives merely of fractional portions of only two or three parishes, with no co-operative representation from other districts subject to inundation throughout the State, have devised a new plan to provide "ways and means" of rebuilding the levees, viz: A draft of able-bodied men, white and of African descent, between the ages of eighteen and forty-five. Well, we had thought we were done with the drafts for the time being—at least until such time as another war perchance might be improvised; we were not aware that any commotion, short of war, could under the laws of the land warrant a draft.

"But it seems the levees are to be put on a "war-footing," and all men white and black, between eighteen and forty-five within the districts subject to floods of the Mississippi, are forthwith admonished to hold themselves in readiness to turn out to construct levee embankments whenever the appeal of the levee conventionists shall evoke an order to that effect from the commanding general of the fifth military district.

In the event of the promulgation of such order, the conventionists remark "that a commutation of \$1 a day from each, per capita, of those drafted, will be received in lieu of their personal labor on the line of levee works."

We fear this new scheme to build the levee will not work, and that in the end "Uncle Sam" will have to undertake the job.

Those, officio and ex-officio, who are agitating the levee question, do not as yet seem to comprehend the magnitude of

the work, nor to be fully aware of the large amount of means required to provide an efficient system of levee protection for the State.

'Tis true their misconceptions may arise, partly from what they have learned from inexperienced and untutored engineers, many of whom believe they can "square the circle," or demonstrate the feasibility of "perpetual motion." Among the hallucinations entertained by not a few levee commissioners, the plan of closing all outlets, and confining the waters in one vast volume within the banks of the Mississippi may be here alluded to as their most favorite theory.

The closing of bayous meandering through the State as outlets of the surcharged waters of the Mississippi is a measure so absurd, and so utterly opposed to those natural laws which provide the only rational means of relieving extensive districts of country from overflow, or of surplus waters, that it is only wonderful that such a measure finds advocates among men having any degree or claim to common sense.

Such a measure should at once be condemned, inasmuch as that it is utterly unsupported by any of the known laws of hydrology.

It surely should be clear, even to the most obtuse mind, that the greater the discharge, or the more numerous the outlets for conducting off the surplus waters, the more rapidly is the main volume of such waters reduced. And as these bayous all find their way continuously and connectively to the gulf, they should be prized as most useful natural veins of discharge, and as efforts of nature to relieve the country from the effects of overflow and inundation.

Let us, therefore, notwithstanding the conflicting theories of engineers, keep our bayous open and unobstructed, and, if possible, open other outlets and channels to conduct the surplus waters to the Gulf, which is sufficiently capacious to receive them without any sensible inconvenience.

J. E.

It would seem, therefore, from the above remarks, that the State Levee question is truly a subject requiring the potent aid of reconstruction: Here then Congress may give a helping hand, with the laudable purpose of enabling the State, through National aid, to carry out the important work of reconstructing the Levees of Louisiana.

But, if the means of repairing and rebuilding the Levees are to await the reconstruction of the State, then we must pause until its political destiny is settled by that august body about to meet in Convention for the purpose of framing anew the State Constitution.

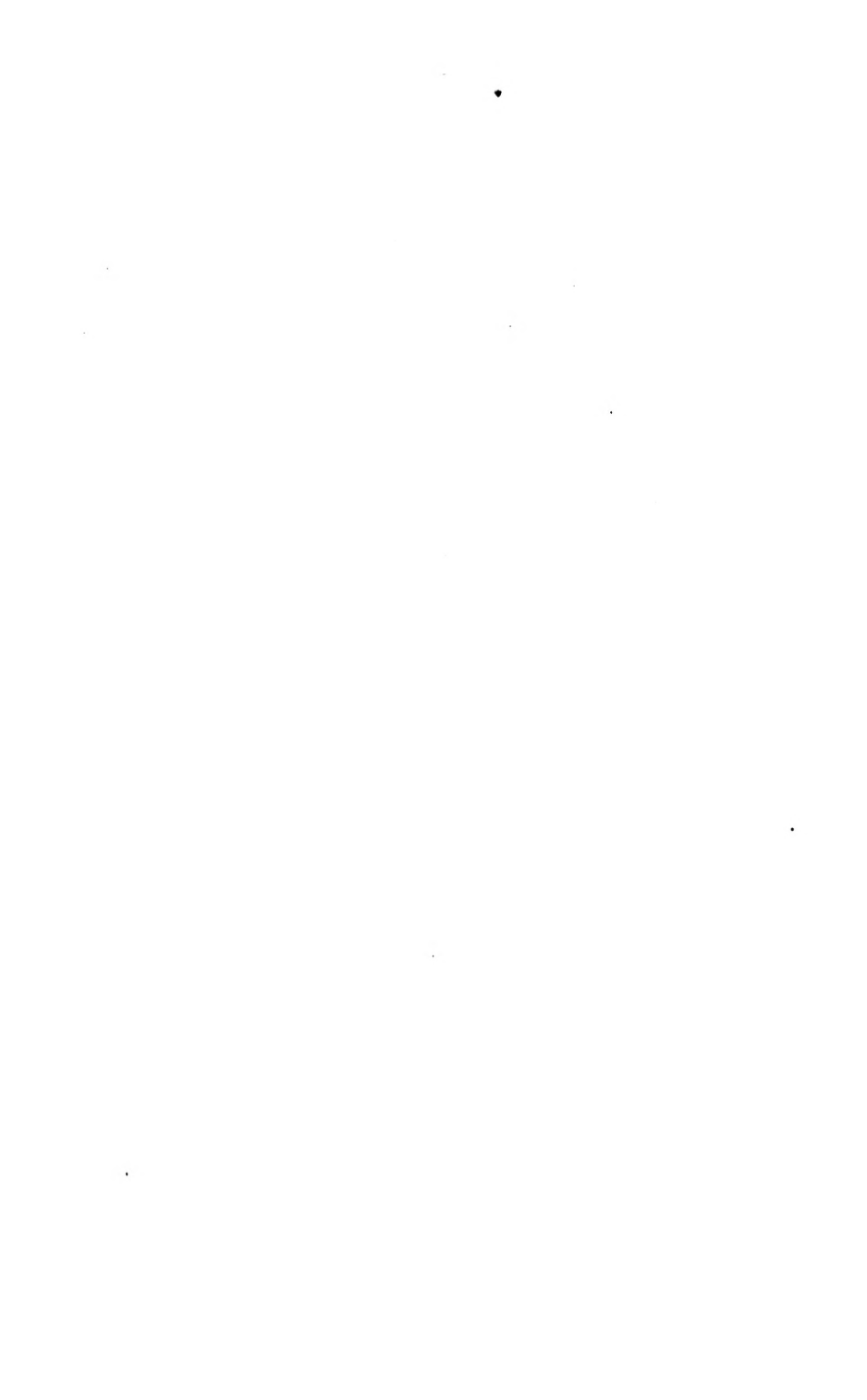
Whatever may be the result of the deliberations of the Convention, it is to be hoped that the State will be restored to Union, ultimately, under such form of Constitution as will, upon a National basis, secure consistently the rights, safety, and welfare of the legitimate people.

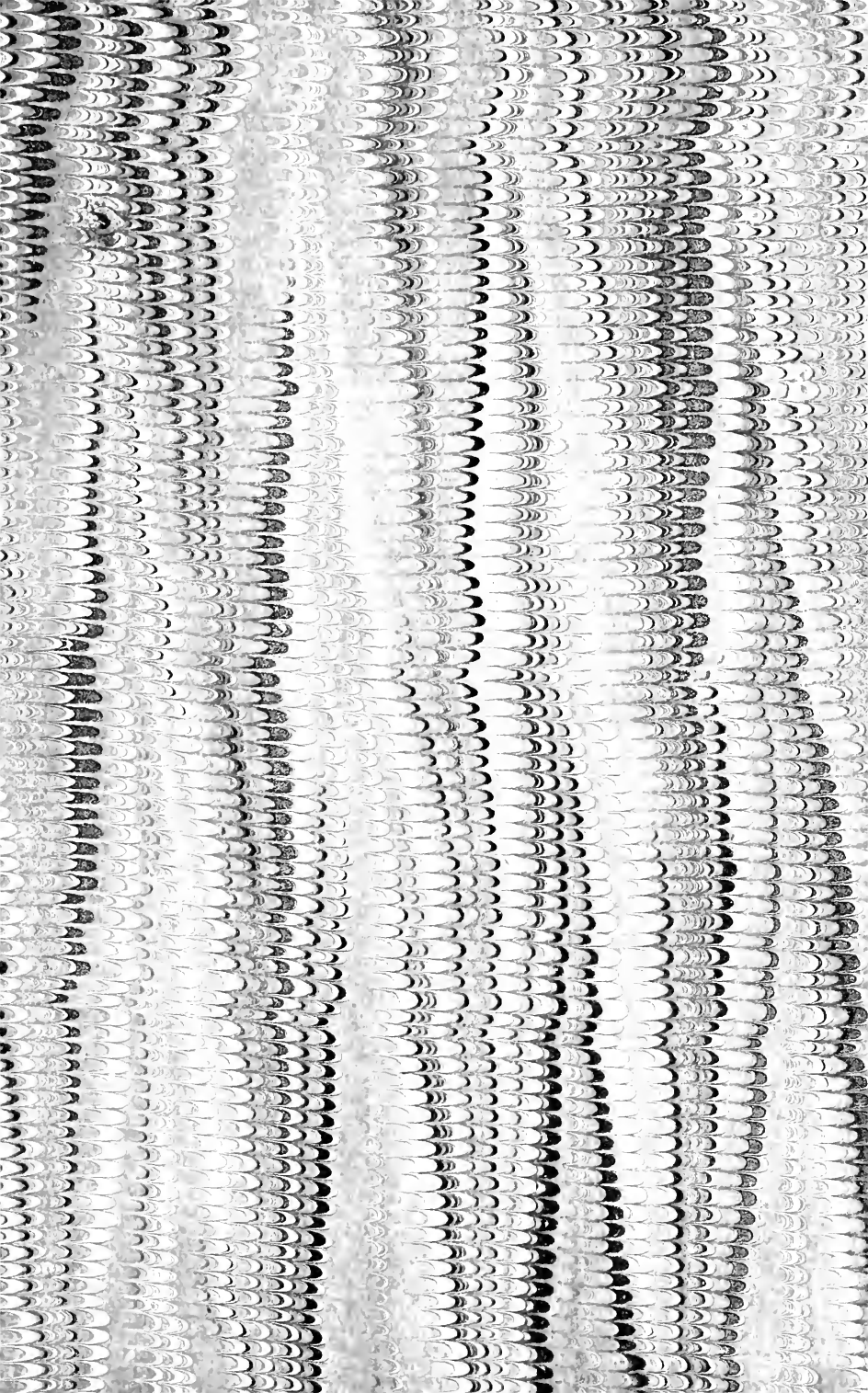
I have the honor to be, Sir, with great respect,

Your obedient Servant,

J. E. EDMONSTON.







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 013 785 613 A